

Inner City Makeover

In a two stage process the central inner city is being transformed into a fresh, modern place providing more open spaces for pedestrians, improving traffic flow and removing the visual barriers to sightlines along Tutanekai and Hinemoa streets.



Mayor Steve Chadwick

A major revamp of the 25-year old City Focus area commenced this week with removal of the two overhead sails on Monday night. Work underway at present will also see the office building and support pillars for the sails dismantled and removed. This first stage will be completed by 18 December to open up the inner city space ahead of the busiest Christmas shopping period. The second stage, and major part of the project, will be undertaken after Easter next year to minimise disruption to summer retail trading. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$1 to 1.2 million.

The inner city makeover has the support of the independent Inner City Focus Group and Block Champions. Comprising city businesses and retailers the groups advocated for removal of the City Focus office building, sails and pillars to visually open up the area, and for slow north-south traffic flow to be reinstated along Tutanekai Street.

Harvey World Travel's Deborah Kay said she had earlier considered the various concepts on display in the council's Ideas Store and given her feedback.

"Then talking to other retailers the idea of removing the sails evolved to create a sunnier environment where people could sit and enjoy lunch outside.

"We're really looking forward to the refresh and opening up the whole inner city from one end to the other. It needs to be modernised and the new concept

provides a balance between convenience for vehicles, and pedestrian and events open space. I really love the story that has been woven into the concept."

Sharon Rehu, from jewellery store Pascoes, said the overall process around upgrading the City Focus area had been a huge success. "We had the choice of three concepts and were able to establish the one that would best fit the needs of locals and visitors.

"As a retailer, it was great to be able to get across what we feel is best for the city centre - to generate a more vibrant atmosphere and bring customers back into the city."

Mayor Steve Chadwick said that after hearing the retailers' views - especially those of Mike Steiner and Hilda Dufty - she was convinced that for Rotorua to get a dynamic interactive place, the sails would have to be removed.

"The rest of the country is going to look at this and say 'wow.' We're putting our money where our mouth is to invest in growth. I think this is incredibly exciting," Mayor Chadwick said.

Rotorua Lakes Council Inner City Revitalisation Portfolio lead, Councillor Karen Hunt, said the council had an opportunity to reinvigorate a much-loved space. "This allows us to use this space in a much more dynamic way. I want to thank the community at large, and particularly the Inner city Focus Group and Block Champions.

"We're moving our city forward. We've now got an opportunity at this significant meeting place to create a very special space for our community."



Councillor Karen Hunt



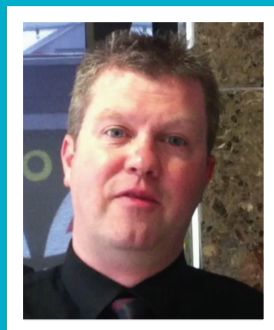
Supporting the inner city makeover



"I think it will create a bit of a buzz"
Lesley Finn
Finns Fashions



"More contemporary, friendly, open and relaxed environment"
Deborah Kay
Harvey World Travel



"I'm quite excited to see some change"
Colin MacPhee
Quest Rotorua Central



"We're in 2015 and its time for an upgrade"
Sharon Rehu
Pascoes



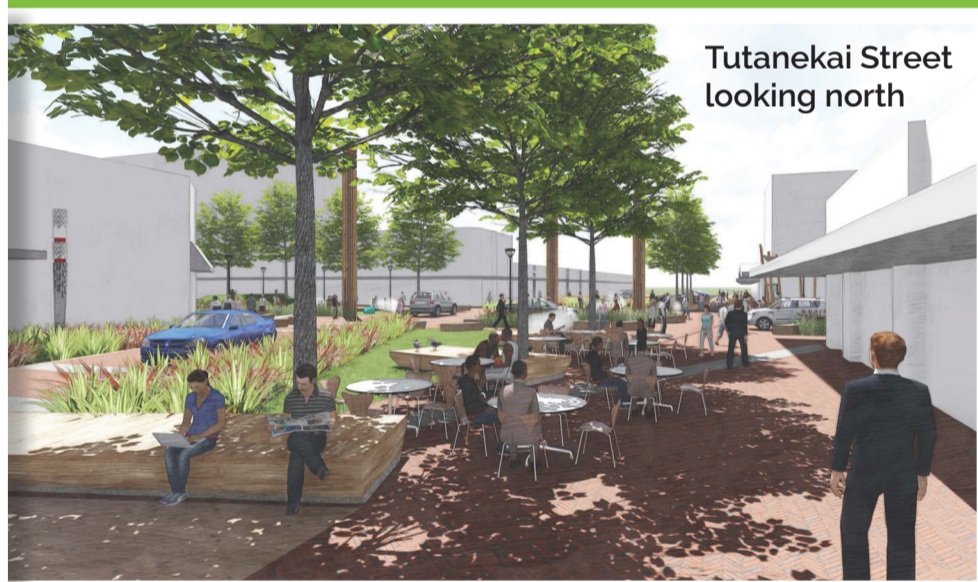
"I'm really looking forward to the upgrade"
Hilda Dufty
Salon St Bruno



"I think it will create more passing traffic"
Simon Strickland
Fix coffee



Hinemoa Street looking east



Tutanekai Street looking north



Pedestrian plaza looking north

Putting pedestrians at the forefront:

- fifty per cent more public open space
- clearer, prioritised pedestrian routes
- design to reflect stories of Tutanekai and Hinemoa
- recognising cultural significance to Te Arawa
- shared space zones east and west
- flexible spaces for relaxing and events
- mix of paved, lawn and garden surfaces
- spaces for cafes to open out on to
- safe pedestrian and through-vehicle routes
- no loss of parking spaces

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#InnerCityMakeover

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